

Adult Ushers. I am pleased to congratulate the Avenue L Missionary Baptist on its 140th anniversary, and wish for its continued success in serving the people of Galveston.

HONORING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR—THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with the millions of Asian-Americans who are celebrating the Lunar New Year and welcoming year 4708, the Year of the Tiger. The origin of Lunar New Year is centuries old and is the most important celebration in the Lunar Calendar. It is also recognized as the Spring Festival. The celebrations traditionally last for 15 days and provide an opportunity to give thanks for one's blessings, celebrate family, resolve arguments, and prepare the community to embark on a new year with hope and charity.

In Chicago, the Lunar New Year was celebrated on February 14, 2010 with the 27th annual Chinese Lunar New Year celebration in Chicago's Chinatown, which I am proud to say resides in my Congressional District. Approximately 40,000 Chicagoans enjoy a Chinese heritage. Restaurants celebrated the holiday by serving special dishes, and thousands of people attend multiple events to commemorate and cherish the traditions of the New Year.

Every year, thousands of Asian-Americans will gather with their families and friends to enjoy the New Year festivities and the company of loved ones. The New Year offers a time for sweeping away misfortune and welcoming the New Year with hopes of prosperity and good luck. We should all take advantage of the opportunity to explore and share in this treasured tradition with family and friends. Embracing this tradition honors the richness of our diversity as Americans.

I congratulate the Asian-American community for their successes and thank them for their contributions to our country this past year. And I wish you all a very happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. I wish all a Gong Hay Fat Choy.

RECOGNIZING THE 2010 CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION SPONSORED BY THE ASIAN COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER IN VIRGINIA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the celebration of Chinese New Year. This year marks the 4,708th year in the Chinese Lunar calendar.

In Virginia's 11th District, constituents of different backgrounds—including Chinese, Indonesian, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Malaysian—gathered on February 13th and 14th to ring in the New Year.

The celebration that many of my constituents attended was sponsored by the Asian

Community Service Center and hosted by Luther Jackson Middle School in Falls Church, Virginia. This celebration was a testament to the rich cultural traditions that are often practiced by the residents of Northern Virginia.

To my constituents and all those who celebrate Chinese New Year, I wish you a prosperous Year of the Tiger.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today our national debt is \$12,402,054,835,588.68.

On January 6th, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$1,763,629,089,294.88 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I missed rollcall Vote Nos. 17–19 on January 26, 2010. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Rollcall Vote No. 17, Expressing support for designation of January 2010 as "National Mentoring Month", "aye."

Rollcall Vote No. 18, Recognizing the importance of cervical health and of detecting cervical cancer during its earliest stages and supporting the goals and ideals of Cervical Health Awareness Month, "aye."

Rollcall Vote No. 19, Expressing support for the designation of January 10, 2010, through January 16, 2010, as National Influenza Vaccination Week, "aye."

RECOGNIZING THE 2010 CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION SPONSORED BY THE HAI HUA COMMUNITY CENTER IN VIRGINIA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the celebration of Chinese New Year. This year marks the 4,708th year in the Chinese Lunar calendar.

In Virginia's 11th District, constituents of different backgrounds—including Chinese, Indonesian, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Malaysian—gathered on February 13th and 14th to ring in the New Year.

The celebration that many of my constituents attended was presented by the Fair Oaks

Mall and sponsored by the Hai Hua Community Center in Virginia. This celebration was a testament to the rich cultural traditions that are often practiced by the residents of Northern Virginia.

This year, the Lunar New Year celebration also included a Lantern Festival celebration. The festivities consisted of cultural performances, demonstrations, and arts and crafts activities. To my constituents and all those who celebrated Chinese New Year, I wish you a prosperous Year of the Tiger.

THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAM ACT OF 2010

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 22, 2010

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, together with Highways and Transit Subcommittee Chairman PETER A. DEFAZIO and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS), I rise today to introduce the "Public Transportation Safety Program Act of 2010", by request of Secretary of Transportation Raymond H. LaHood. I commend the Department of Transportation (DOT) for focusing its first legislative proposal on improving transit safety, and I am pleased to work together with Secretary LaHood and Federal Transit Administrator Peter M. Rogoff on this important initiative.

Currently, public transportation remains one of the safest modes of passenger travel. In recent years, the fatality rate for rail transit systems—such as subways and light rail—has decreased to just .002 fatalities per 100 million passenger miles. This is one of the lowest fatality rates of all surface transportation modes. At the same time, Americans are riding transit at record levels. The growth in transit ridership is almost triple the growth rate of the population, and substantially more than the growth rate for vehicle miles traveled on our nation's highways. This public transportation renaissance taking place in cities large and small across America further elevates the importance of transit safety, while also spotlighting an issue that is inextricably linked to safety—the state of good repair of public transit systems.

Unfortunately, the state of good repair of many transit systems has not kept up with the influx of new riders. Maintenance levels at many public transit agencies have decreased to a point where older, less safe rail cars, tracks, electrical equipment, and other assets are left in service long after their useful life. According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), more than one-third of the total assets of the largest rail systems in the country are in either marginal or poor condition, and the estimated maintenance backlog for the nation's rail transit systems exceeds \$80 billion. According to DOT's 2008 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance, an average of \$21.1 billion in annual capital investment is needed to bring all transit assets to a good condition by 2026. This level of investment represents an annual increase of \$8.3 billion—an increase of 64.8 percent—above current capital investment levels.

In addition to addressing this maintenance backlog, the Federal Transit Administration